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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

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Sixtieth year

Letter dated 11 January 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to draw your attention to the latest severe violation of the Blue Line from Lebanese territory. On 9 January 2005, Captain Sharon Elmakayes, a 23-year-old Israeli soldier, was killed by an explosive device activated by the Hezbollah terror organization in the Har Dov region, well beyond the Blue Line.

Israeli forces returned defensive fire at Hezbollah targets in the area, and struck Hezbollah posts used to attack Israel. Regrettably, a French United Nations officer who was present during the incident was killed in the ensuing exchange of fire. Israel expresses its sorrow at the death of Jean-Louis Valet, and offers its condolences to his family and loved ones, and to the Government and people of France. His tragic loss serves to highlight the dangerous and untenable situation in southern Lebanon caused by Hezbollah terrorist activity, and the need for concrete steps to be taken to bring an end to the consistent violations by Hezbollah of the sovereignty and security of both Lebanon and Israel that endanger civilians on both sides of the Blue Line.

As the international community is aware, in May 2000, Israel withdrew completely from Lebanon, in full and confirmed compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Nevertheless, Lebanon continues to refuse to meet its obligations as stipulated in resolution 425 (1978), subsequent Security Council resolutions and international law. Since that time, terrorist attacks against Israelis enabled by the complicity of the Government of Lebanon, have continued unabated despite the presence of UNIFIL, and with the support of the Syrian and Iranian regimes that have long sponsored, trained and financed these terrorist groups. Hezbollah, a terrorist organization with a long record of terrorist activity and a broad network of cells, continues to destabilize the region, including through extensive collaboration with Palestinian terrorist groups and in a direct attempt to undermine the chance at progress in the peace process. The timing of this latest attack, on the day of Palestinian elections, is no coincidence and follows a pattern of

Hezbollah activity, sponsored by Iran and Syria, that is directly designed to thwart international efforts to improve the situation on the ground.

The failure of the Government of Lebanon to restore peace and security, ensure the return of its effective authority, disband and disarm Hezbollah, and prevent cross-border attacks from its territory is what compels Israel to engage in defensive actions and is the direct cause of instability in the area. Each of these failures represents a direct negation of basic obligations under international law and the provisions of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 1310 (2000), 1337 (2001), 1373 (2001), 1553 (2004), 1559 (2004) and 1566 (2004).

Lebanon, Syria and Iran are not absolved of their legal obligations to fight terrorism, like any other State, as part of the global campaign against international terrorism. The international community should place the responsibility where it belongs and do its utmost to bring about an end to this dangerous situation, and demand nothing less than full compliance by these countries with their international obligations.

I should be grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as an official document of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 148, "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", and 36, "The situation in the Middle East" and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ambassador Dan **Gillerman**
Permanent Representative